

# APA-TECH 23½ : a supplement

Whilst yer faithful servant, Shalmaneser, was gadding about Illinois and enjoying "himself" at Capricon, some more items arrived in "his" mailbox. Those of you who attended the convention are receiving them here; those of you who did not will be receiving everything in #23 at once (sorry for the delay...).

## The 555 Times #23½

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	<hr/> 27 pages
total for A-T #23 :	81 pages

and we are happy to add to the roster:

Andy Anda - 2531 C 46<sup>th</sup>, Los Alamos, N.M. 87544 (505)-662-4196

\* who asked me to tell you that he was feeling somewhat down when he wrote this, but is better now, thank you...

\* Dr. Gonzo's Electric Locomotive Journal

a rather jubilant zine from Valli Hoski at 710 S. Scoville, Oak Park IL 60304 and (312) DUFF-VMH, now that the holiday season is over and I am at home again. For ApaTech 23, and of the period December 1982/January 1983.

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Just returned from the annual GT pajama-party supreme - Ishercon. Yes, the Kalamazoo extravaganza occurred with crowded regularity this year, and techies from the north, east, west, and south converged upon ~~each other~~ that fair techie haven, Kazoo. In total, a crowd of about 35-40 kept each other's warm company for 3-4 days, and also managed to keep the snow away as well. Of the ApaTech membership, I saw Bentley, Jerry, Al, Clif, John, Higgins, Renee, Dick, Rod, Donna, Rolf there, and talked to Greg and Keith on the phone and yelled hello to Misha as Renee held the phone. To the rest who weren't there, may your New Year's have been as enjoyable as mine.

'Twas grand to be at the Walnut St. homesteads again. Didn't realize how much I'd missed everyone until I saw you all again. My presence probably wasn't very sparkling as I did manage to get caught up on my missed sleep, and missed going to Steve's for the movies and the firecrackers, etc. on New Year's. But during various cooking chores, shopping expeditions and rounds of Benson, Arizona I did at least note the presence of many a missed friend, and caught up on news and times with some of you. May all of you have a marvelous remaining 1983.

Exciting things that I did do include seeing Tootsie and Dark Crystal. No, those were not Steve's surprise movies this year, but were the \$2 matinee specials at the local Kazoo movie mall. Went shopping to that undescrivable haven of discount stores - Meier's Thrifty Acres (a.k.a. Shifty Takers) with Al, who probably will swear off going shopping with me again. After an hour in this incredible place, I discovered that I needed a headlight for my car. Went back 2 days later for it, because I didn't want to spend another hour in that place. Meier's is like a supermarket and a K-Mart merger. You can probably outfit an entire home, including furniture and food, and clothe an entire family (and pets) without ever leaving that one store. It may be in all thrifty specials, but hey, Meier's probably has everything but the house frame. Anyway, I paid my visit to the shrine, and never did find Tullio's balloons. Oh, I did get my headlight there on Sunday, and with John Fraumbach's kind company and assistance, drove back to Chicago with 2 gleaming eyes on my car instead of one. (In case anyone ever needs to know, Tullio has several sizes of Allen wrenches in his drawers in the basement.)

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\* Quick survey for A/T members: does it matter to you what I usually call my zine after the usual "Dr. Gonzo's ..."? If the variety in titles amuses or interests A/T members, I will continue to name it differently every time. Else I will standardize with something like "Dr. Gonzo's Usual". Opinions?

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I also did spend time at Isher, sang techie songs with Higgins, Flynt, et.al. in the wee hours of Sunday ayem, before the legendary "chocolate-covered White Cloud donut/toilet paper run". (I will let those with greater story-telling power than I possess, relate that strange occurrence.) Washed dishes, cooked a good hamburger or two (if I say so myself; actually mixed a good hamburger or two, as John cooked them all), slept, sang slightly off-key, and took a long time to leave on Sunday.

I have this obscure notion floating around in my head to start a SIG in G<sub>T</sub> for those of us who have been the "token liberal arts majors" in the various techie groups in different cities/universities. To start at the beginning, when I first became acquainted with G<sub>T</sub> I was fascinated by all the wit and talk I heard around me. For a number of months, I simply enjoyed listening to everyone and didn't even bother asking many questions. Then I grew more bold and began my endless series of "But how does it work/ do that" questions, which still spring forth from my eternally awestruck mind. However, I have also begun to feel slightly at home with some skills that I think are valuable, and I certainly manage to do passably well at. However, I am not an engineer, computer person, or other typical G<sub>T</sub> occupation/interest. I do work with computers, but from the viewpoint of tools to teach with, or tools to learn about. I have felt as if I was the only humanities kid on the block, surrounded by all these wild&crazy & lovable science types. (Let's not digress on whether there really is any difference in what any arts or sciences student knows, ok, Mr. Higgins? We can discuss Renaissance people later.) Several times I have found common threads of experience or interest in my closer friends, such as video with Bill Higgins and Herb Johnson, or teaching d.p./computer systems with Jamie Hanrahan. But I have still pretty much felt the exception techie, rather than a real member. Well, I have the fortunate grace of getting to know John (Fraumbach) this Ishercon, and am tickled silly at meeting another fellow lib. arts type. Formal SIGs really don't exist within G<sub>T</sub>, unless you count the folks who trade information on their same computers, networks, what have you. But I just think it'd be nifty to have a home within G<sub>T</sub> for the non-technical techie, so that when other folks start hashing out the virtues/faults of their latest home systems, we also manage to feel at home too. Steve Salaba suggested a name like "Just the guys..." but I'm trying to find something a little more general. Maybe this is unnecessary or hare-brained but I think it would help to recognize the diversity of interests and multiplicity of talents within G<sub>T</sub> past the software wizards and raygun magicians, to some individuals who are indeed more than just token or fringe techies.

Some other faces who do not appear in A/T's pages, but who were at Kazoo include: Mary Lynn Skirvin, Mary Wilson, Phil Foglio, Cecilia (from NY), Roxanne Meida, Mark (from Ann Arbor), Hugh (from Xanadu), Tom Johansen, Marth Soukup, Andy Anda, Jim Furstengerg, Mike Walsh, Bonnie Jones, Alice Insely, a few Battle Creek faces I don't recall names of, Steve Salaba (of course), and probably more I've forgotten. All in all, a great crew, and visits were also exchanged between Marty Franz, Renee Seiber and Alex and many of this bunch. Marty has 3 cats which are great at being cat comforters and seem to like being buried under blankets and rolled over upon by sleeping humans. Hopefully none of the 3 was asphyxiated by a unknowing sleeping person, though. The usual hot-water-lack- and bathroom-waiting-line events occurred with great predictability. The same two burners work and don't work on the stove. There is a new concrete set of back stairs, however. The front door didn't work, and I didn't find out why. The attic is insulated and much warmer, which meant that there were fewer sleeping bodies downstairs. Didn't seem overly crowded, just nice and friendly and people everywhere. (Incidentally, from the hot water and bathroom-line on, I am talking about 530 Walnut, not Marty's house.) Add to the list of names, Barry Gehm, and Dave Powell, and Sheila from Rochester. Sunday's burritoos were heroically presented by Tom Johanssen, who lonely prepared them while everyone else was off at Star World, the movies, or elsewhere. The least crisis-ridden and most relaxed Ishercon I've been at yet, which include Ishercon II and III and V ('80, '81, '83).

A 4-8-2 or F40PH or C-C+1A1A is not the latest microprocessor!!

Trains are more than just a way of getting from Point A to Point B. They can be an entire way of life or travel or adventure in themselves. Of course, just as computers, train jargon can be mysterious from the designations for steam locomotives (4-8-2) or diesel/electric locomotives (F40PH) or diesel locomotive wheel configurations (C-C+1A1A). But instead of sitting there and letting you tell it what to do, trains are a process or journey in themselves.

I rode several of the new Budd cars which the CTA (Chicago Transit Authority) received lately. Funny thing I noticed while riding one morning to work - the train was quieter than usual. Not quite supersonic calm, mind you, but certainly not as rattling and bone-jarring as usual. Then I began to look around the car and noticed how clean it was, how new it looked. Noticed the car # in the 2700 series. Upon talking with a local friend, found out that this car was one of the newest that the CTA has received. Probably was only a month or so in service at the time. The quality of the ride has certainly improved and it makes taking the CTA almost worthwhile. Not the charm and comfort of the Twenty Century Unlimited, or even the elitism of the real commuter railroads, such as the Chicago & NorthWestern, but hey, what do you want from the CTA? Class? I'd gladly settle for the smoother ride, and reliable service that these new cars might bring.

Speaking of commuter RRs though, briefly I've taken several journeys on two Chicago area commuter lines. In December, I rode the north branch of the Milwaukee Road line out to Fox Lake and back. Was a bright, sharp Sunday afternoon for walking around Fox Lake and admiring the summer resort town in the winter. Fox Lake is much like the Kensington Metro Park area of Michigan, for those former MSUers in the area, or is a summer resort area grown into year-round occupancy. All the little lakes around the town were frozen over, and the country-side was winter clad. I rode the line like a tourist, oohing and aahing over the car and the track. A local sf and railroad fan who travelled along with me, Mike Levin, filled me in on the history and stories behind portions of the track we rode over. Paralleled part of the old Chicago, North Shore & Milwaukee right-of-way, and that is a RR which is full of local lore and stories. Quite a neat way to spend a winter afternoon and only drive to the train station.

Rode the southern counterpart of the CNS&M in January to South Bend and back with several other Chicago sf/rail fan. The Chicago, South Shore & South Bend is the remainder of the great Sam Insull electric railroad/utility company empire. The CNS&M was once part of the same empire until it ceased service in 1963. The South Shore received new cars recently and we wanted to ride them, and hopefully some of the old cars as well. So, one Sunday afternoon, in winter storm warnings abounding for northwestern Indiana, of course, Jim Kobrinetz, John Donat, Joa Schurmann (a fellow Anderson team member of mine from work) and I journeyed eastward and back. The new cars rode nicely, quietly, although the plastic interiors reminded me of the CTA. The restroom is HUGE (you could almost throw a con party in it) because it's designed to accomodate the handicapped and certainly will. The ride was made all the more enjoyable by a very pleasant conductor who let us spread our picnic lunch out in the rear car, and let us ride alone from South Bend to Michigan City before opening the car to other riders (there was no crowding in the other car, so we weren't inconveniencing anyone). The wine/cheese/salami/homemade bread/wonderful cookies/apples/oranges lunch was a very nice touch. Wandered around Michigan City in the cold and snow, to the lakefront which was majestic and achingly beautiful. I've never see frozen sand sculptures and crystal reeds on a winter beach before. However, after the ride home, I slept for 8 hrs. when I meant to take only a 1 hr. nap. The trip was fun, and the cold exhausting.

Since then, I've had a chance to ride the CNS&M pride and joy - the Electroliners. Might sound peculiar because as I said, the line has been out of service since 1963. The Illinois Railway Museum acquired one set of Electroliner cars from SEPTA (South-Eastern Penn. Transit Authority) last summer, and brought them out and ran them on the museum track for a special weekend in January. I went to the museum with Jim, Mike and Mark, as usual, and rode trains on all day Sat. and Sunday. Not only the Electroliners, which were exclusive and marvelous trains in their day, but also some earlier CNS&M cars, CTA cars, and crawled around steam, electric and diesel locomotives. What a really neat way to play! Sat around with the other folk and composed a goawdawful folksong on the CTA to the tune of "Daisy, Daisy" at 2 AM on Sunday, after the humungous banquet. Someday I might print the words in A/T. Til then, if you hear me singing some weird words to that tune, run the other way. The parody is perverse, it really is, but it's also wonderful. And is still in the writing, with 10 verses down and who knows how many more to come.

Let me close my narrative on the great steel rails, with one short notice. With the primary coming up in Chicago, Janey Byrne plans on opening part of the O'Hare extension of the CTA Milwaukee line on Sun., Feb. 13. Rides are free that day, and the equipment should be all shiny and spiffed up. Except that A/T shan't publish before then, I would invite any and all to ride along. But I shall be happy to tell the tale of the ride that day, in the next exciting issue.

Will wrap-up with random thoughts on A/T 22 and deliver this to Greg in a few days:

Cover Rod, is that Ozzie of the great fame? (The phone fame, that is). I remember meeting him in Rochester at Jeff's I think at some Beserker or other.

Great GTB Hokay, you want minac, have minac. You want a deadline, set a dealine. Right now I use the 10th of the month as the guideline and try and hit it fairly on. Bill Higgins reminders also help.

Rod My two zines in A/T 21 were separate. The Chicon report was franked through and was a separate critter from my A/T zine. The thoughts I had on worldcon in the usual Dr. Gonzo's were aimed more at the A/T audience, rather than the more general cts in the report. I felt very strongly about the GT dinner and the closeness I felt with everyone there, and I still do. Those same feelings are reflected in my cts on Ishercon/Kalamazoo in this zine. It's wonderful to come home in GT.

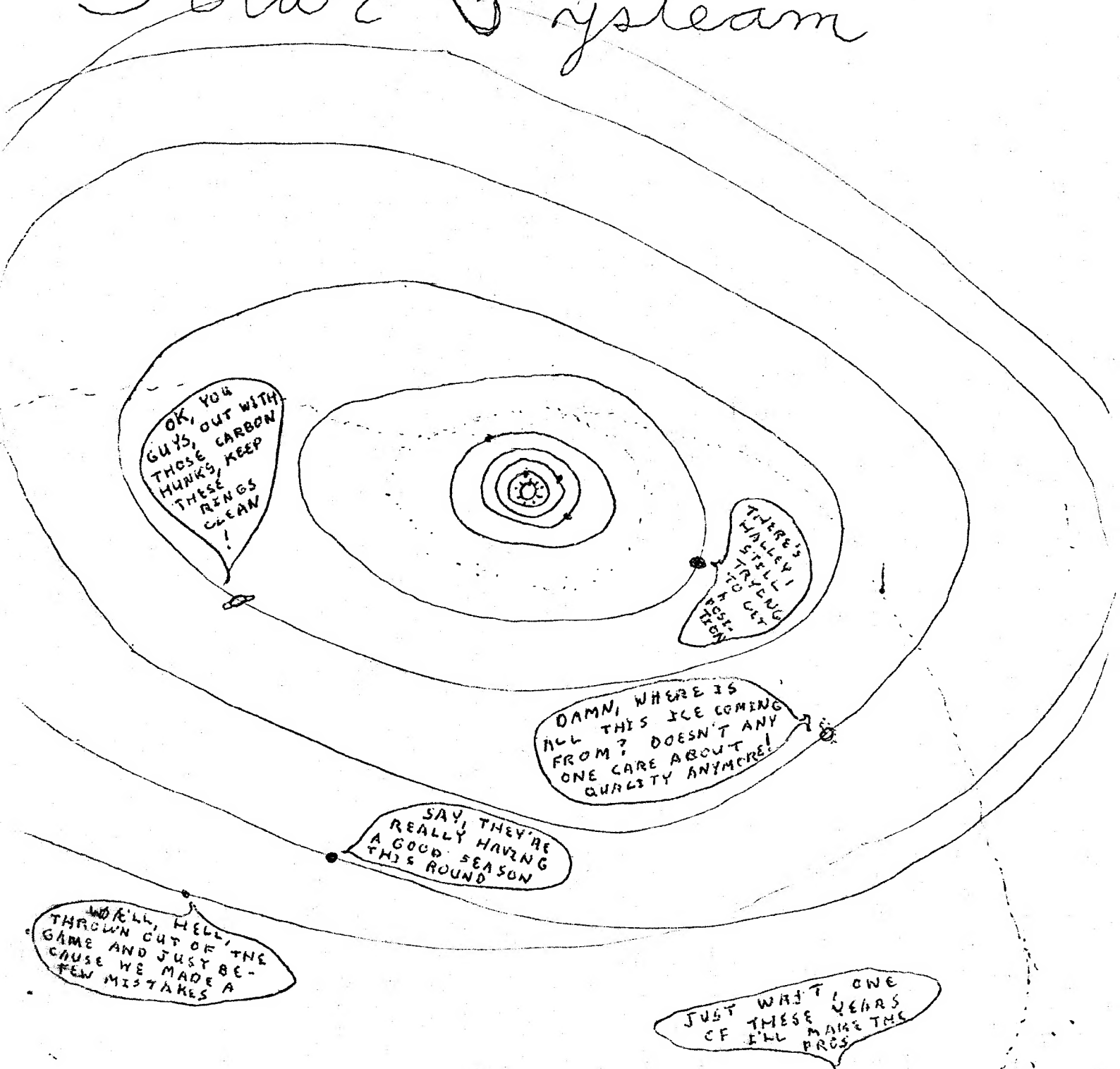
Al How many times are you gonna make me groan at that title?//Re yr ct re those "little bugs" (lobsters): of course I love 'em!! Hokay, what con will you be at that we can feast on them at? (Besides Boskone, silly!) Any con in the near future in the midwest again?//Re yr cts Rolf re Vermont: yes, it is a lovely place and my heart breaks to be there and around New England again. But for now Chicago is home and will do okay, if I can't have New England.

Artists Assembled Thanks again for all yr effort in this great tradition, Greg. People sure draw funny faces, ya know?

Bill (Higgins) I loved yr version of the great Michigan expedition! Thanks for having me along and even enduring my crankiness at KMS. I really do like loose hamburgers and they are "Detroit" to me, even if you don't think they are so great.//Thanks for picking up the typer, although it's been real cranky of late.//We may not have given up on changing the world, but we do it more peacably now. Talk to Mike Levin about change. He still really believes in what some of us have despaired of ever changing, and who knows may be he carries the hope for tomorrow.//And welcome back to the world of days. I will still see you in W. Chicago though.

Bill (Leininger) Did you purposely avoid putting yr name on yr zine anywhere? Gee, but I am surprised my yr writing style. Somehow it just didn't sound like you at all.//You are a Wizard, one of the originals.

# YOUNG AND ABROAD in the Solar System



# YOUNG AND ABROAD

in the

## Solar System

The ramblings of Michael Sestak, ok so they're not coming from po box 1866, but 2025 N. College #57, still, send mail to the po box.

It would be a lot easier if I sent contributions more often, but for the past few months I feel like I have been too busy dodging disasters to write anything. The last issue I talked about going to MileHiCon at the end of October. That weekend one of my teeth started to hurt and Monday after I was told it was infected. The next couple months I spent going to a dentist about once a week for a root canal. I am still paying for all this. Meanwhile in mid-November, I was run into by a car on my bicycle. I came out ok in spite of being thrown onto the hood of the car. However, I got a ticket because I was making a left turn and supposed to have let the car go through first (except the car stopped about a car length back from the intersection when the light was red and didn't start when the light changed so I thought it was parked, some people drive weird). I got out of the ticket, but the guy who owns the car (and he wasn't driving) wants me to pay for the ding in his fender and dent in the hood. His insurance company wouldn't (it was below his deductible), so why should I. I can't even pay my tuition or books till I get my income tax refund. Anyway, my glasses came off and were scratched up something fierce in the accident so I had to buy a new pair of those so it's already cost me too much. Am I complaining, no! There is actually more, but if I were to continue, that would be complaining. After all, somehow good things still do occur, like last term in spite of everything I managed to get a straight 4.0 grade.

On changing minac: I agree entirely with Renee's comments. I don't need any more reasons to put off writing. The apa has no waitlist anyway so people temporarily in a bind can drop out for a while then re-enter when keel evening has been accomplished. In any case, the apa certainly doesn't need to be made thinner.



Rort Collins is a marvelous place to live. Its the only place I know that makes ultadense computer chips but many of the residents mow their lawns with human powered push mowers. Maybe Ray Bradbury would approve. They are in the process of expanding the bus system here. Going from 5 buses on one hour loop routes and one transfer point to 9 buses mostly running on half hour routes in an interlocking grid pattern. I wouldn't say confusion is rampant, but many people obviously don't realize the benefits (getting most anywhere in the system within an hour instead of two) of the new system. One other change in the system, though, I don't know if I like or not. Before, three of the buses were Mercedes mini-buses. The top of my skull applauds their retirement. On the other hand, they had a very distinctive engine sound and so you didn't have to watch for them, you could do something else like read and just listen. Ah, well, progress!

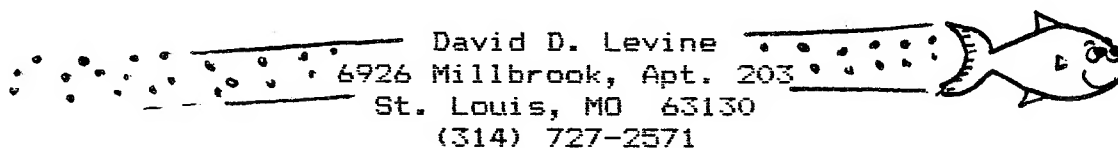
I was right, there is a radio renaissance going on. Not only has NPR doing some great things like A Canticle for Leibowitz (which I think is being done extremely well and highly recommend), and the soon to come Empire Strikes Back, as well as their usual short features on Earplay and Nightfall, but many other groups are producing radio drama as well. A group called the Mind's Eye does radio adaptations of classic books such as The Prairie by James Fenimore Cooper. This was pretty good especially considering large parts of the book are eloquent descriptions of the places or people involved and thus a bit much for radio. Another series I heard came from India, bizarre stuff even though the stories were supposed to be more or less simple tales of ordinary daily life. Then there is a British rendering of Tolkein's Lord of the Rings though not perfect, it is better than any of the movie or TV versions of Tolkien's works. (That may not be a fair comparison, but I make it anyway.) And there is more, much more. I began discovering all this when I decided that I wasn't watching the TV but just letting it run in the background. It seemed dumb to have the thing going if I was too busy to watch it. So I started listening to the radio when I wanted something to listen to while working and only watching the tube when I really could watch it. With my stereo connected to the TV antenna I can get three NPR stations. There is something on which is often not music that is worth listening to on one of them at virtually any hour that I listen, including one station that stays on late (all) night. In fact I just remembered one of hhe best programs. It's called Cosmos and it does bear a faint resemblance to Sagan's TV show. It is about 15 minutes of this guy by the name of Glen Webster musing about modern science and technology, what they are, where they are going and how they are likely to (or already are) affecting the way people live and think, etc, etc, etc. I like it.



## THE FIRST HALF SENTENCE

Being a collection of diverse drolleries and confused cogitations from the fevered mind of

David D. Levine  
6926 Millbrook, Apt. 203  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
(314) 727-2571



and intended for publication in APA-TECH #23. If it makes it in time. \*BEEP\* It is now 7:48 on Feb. 9, 1983. Begin.

### PRECIS

(If you haven't the time to read the rest of the zine, you can just read this part.) Since the last time I wrote (was it four months ago? Six?) life has been the usual mixture of humor and terror, only more so. Techie activity has ground to a halt, and fanac virtually so, in the face of overwhelming pressure from the Real World. Occasionally I go to the monthly meeting of the local SF club. The last con I attended was Chambanacon (various Bills will remember meeting me there, as evidenced by the illos I serruptitiously sneaked into their zines) and I could only attend that for one and a half of the three days. Fortunately, the school gives us Washington's Birthday off (Washington University, get it?), so I'll be able to go to CapriCon. Hope to see many of you there. // Feb. 21 (the following Monday) is also my 22nd birthday, so I figure they've cancelled classes on my behalf. Nice of them.

### INTRODUCTION TO ARCHITECTURE II: THE WRATH OF KAHN

The most important things in my life recently have all been associated with school. I made it through last semester with only minimal damage (suffered a drop in grade point, but my average is still B+ or above, I think). I find that I am doing better in graphics than in design classes. Perhaps they're trying to tell me something. (I did get an A+ in Graphics, a course which in previous years so many people did not complete that this year they refused to give Incomplete grades.) Does this mean that I should be an illustrator rather than a designer?

The title of this section refers to a project I did for my introductory theory class (Intro. to Arch. II) on the work of architect Louis I. Kahn. Fascinating stuff. I want to design more like him. The title of the zine ("The First Half Sentence") refers to the thought I had recently that I have written the first half sentence of my life story. Here it is:

### THE LIFE STORY OF DAVID D. LEVINE:

Trained as an architect, he...

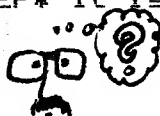
The thing that is bothering me is that I haven't the foggiest notion what goes next. I will be graduating in May (barring any catastrophes) and I would like to get away from academia for a while (besides, I haven't the money for grad school). Therefore, I would like a job by then. However, the architecture field is in a disastrous quagmire right now. Since I'll have only a BA in architecture and no job experience, I'm really worried about being able to find a job in the field. I could, instead, find a job doing documentation writing or some other computer thing. I worry that this is not going to be a good application of what I've spent the last four years doing, and conversely that my lack of any formal training will hurt my chances there. I am also looking into the possibility of work as a toy/game designer and (more a vague hope than anything more concrete) some sort of prop or set designer for someone like Lucasfilm or Henson Associates. However, I know that you have to have "contacts" in these turbulent times to get a job, and I have none to speak of.

### I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AN SF LOVER

In search of a job, therefore, and because I wanted a vacation, I went to San Francisco for a few weeks over winter break. I was looking for a job in SF because it is one of my favorite cities in the world (Minneapolis is another, but it's cold. Chicago has some of my favorite people, but it's not one of my favorite cities in itself). Myself and Kurt Gollhardt (a friend and apartment-mate who came with me to last year's CapriCon and the previous year's Windycon) went out by plane (we had originally planned to drive, but were talked out of it. Fortunate, since if we'd driven we would have hit Denver at the same time as that massive storm.) and stayed at the house of Russell Targ, my father's old college chum and now a psychic researcher.

While there, we saw the sights in the city and Bay Area and had several job interviews. Most architecture firms told me that they simply weren't hiring. One had so little business they were doing a four-day work week, and others had recently laid off many people. One or two said they were enough interested in me that if they get any work between now and May they might hire me. I also contacted a few computer firms. MicroPro (of WordStar fame) was very impressed by me and asked for samples of my fiction. (They're hiring fiction and journalistic writers as well as "tech writers" for their documentation.) However, as you may have read, they recently had a management shake-up and fired a good proportion of their staff. Right now they are under a hiring freeze, but it may be relaxed by May. I'm keeping my fingers crossed on that one. I also was interviewed by a fellow from SEI (Dave Ihnat also works for them) but I've since received a rejection letter from them. I have quite a few of those.

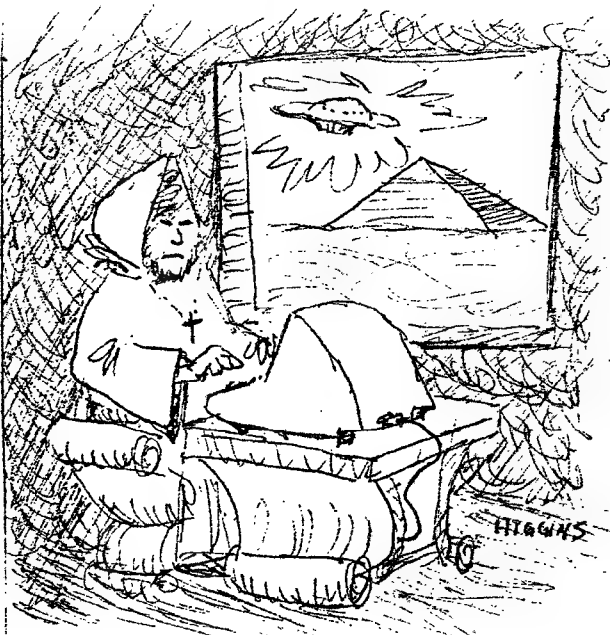
I'd like to write more, including some MC's, but I have to leave in a few minutes and the deadline presseth. In conclusion, let me restate that I'm looking for a job come May. If you see anything go by, let me know. \*BEEP\* It is now 8:57 on Feb. 9, 1983. End.

*Fri D. Li* 

# FishGOAT Follies presents Capricorn is a Pisces

or mebbe  
an  
Aquarius...

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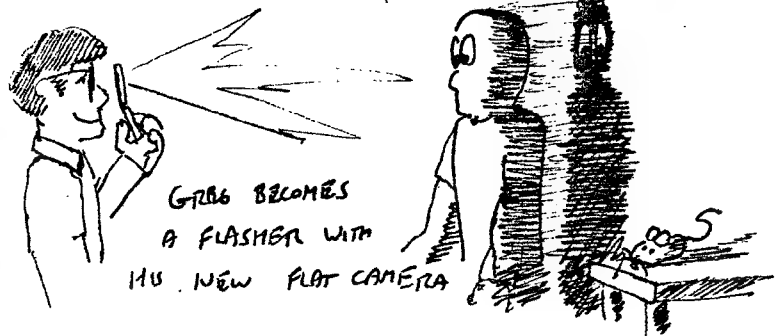
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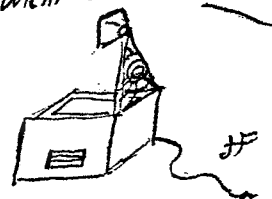


That tower elevator  
was a long time a'comin'...



GREAT MOMENTS  
IN  
ANTIMATER  
ORATORY:

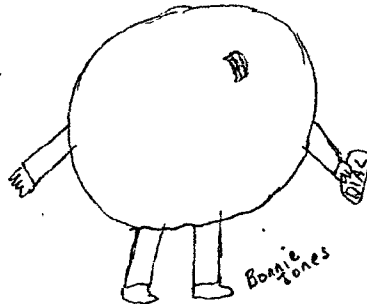
ONE FINAL  
QUESTION, THEN  
WE'LL HAVE TO  
WRAP THIS PANEL UP



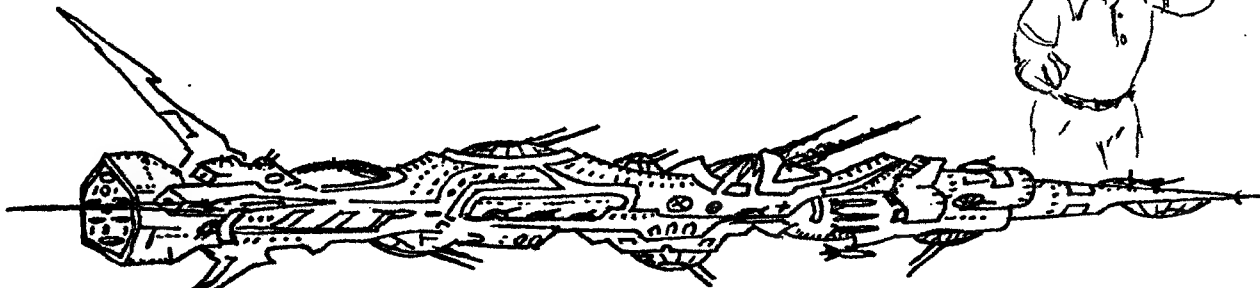
We got to help  
stock up the Con Suite...



Anybody seen  
Greg lately?



Aren't you glad  
you chew dial?



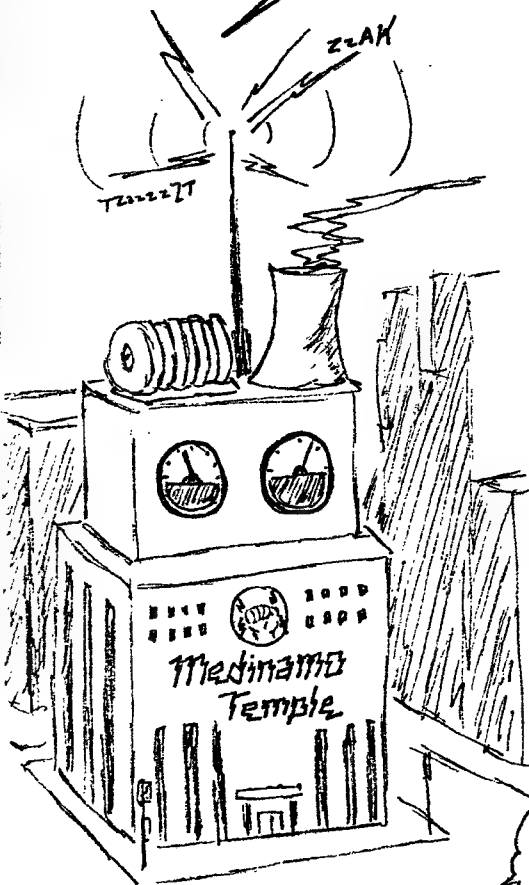
"NOW LET'S SEE IF THEY DON'T LET US INTO  
THE CON-SUITE"

SUNDAY  
MORNING

We don't have  
TIME to hear  
Marvin Minsky speak -  
SEND THE ROBOT!



Sigh:  
More stuff  
about  
TURTLES  
again...



Those techies and  
their secret cult  
have gone TOO FAR!



SELF  
PORTRAIT

# Meromorphic Mélange

Back home at the Center for Spaced Research, Hamburg, N.J.

\* \* \*

The weather here is going into its impersonation of Spring, melting our foot of snow cover all at once. It looks like Punxsawtawney Phil was right. Now if we can just avoid an April blizzard...

For the four days I spent in Chambana, I sure didn't see very much. Rolf picked up our slides and I got the last of my Xeroxes about an hour before Mary, John Nine, he and I skipped town. We stopped at a Perkins' Cake and Steak ("We always stop here...") on I-57 just south of Chicago before I was dropped off ("OK now -- just tuck and roll...") at the Continental Hotel (the erstwhile Radisson) to visit Thursdaynight in the sumptuous 37th-floor Con Suite (how many have you seen with a master bedroom on the second floor?). I was there to meet folks (many of whom I'd just seen the previous weekend), collate the bulk of APA-TECH (which I'm told was a very fannish thing to do -- have to watch that!), and wheedle a place to stay for the night. What I wound up doing for over an hour was to help transfer pegboard panels for the Art Show from the parking garage to the seventh floor. That this took over an hour convinces me that there's no such thing as a SMDF: SF fandom is in no danger of being organized... Once I made my way back upstairs, I was told I might be able to stay overnight in the Con Suite if I volunteered a couple hours of my time to oversee the place sometime during the weekend. As it developed, I couldn't stay there and I managed to extract an offer from Doug van Dorn, but they still had my name down for Friday afternoon (it ain't called the Con Suite for nothin'...).

I saw little of my hosts, as they were madly preparing for their Möbius Theater presentation at the convention. (This was a motif which would appear throughout the weekend.) My stay was pleasant enough, except for the unswerving gaze of the assembled multitude of cats, leaving me with the impression that it was their day-bed I was sleeping in... Bill-Are popped over from next door to deliver the Möbius props and me to the hotel. Checking into the hotel was complicated by the building's peculiar key policy. I'd reserved two quads, so I had to make out a form for each of the eight people staying with me and would have to sign each of them individually as they picked up their keys. The keys themselves are plastic punch-cards which one slips into a slot over the doorknob. These cards cannot be stored in a wallet or hip-pocket; by Sunday, it looked like Uri Geller had been on the loose...

By the time I got into my room, I had enough time to dump my bags and run upstairs to the Con Suite for my hours from three to five. Running upstairs was generally the sensible thing to do: that strange old building has but two elevators which go past the 25th floor. This made the prospect of travelling to my room or the Suite rather grim at times (this was a motif which... etc.). I appeared at a minute of three, only to be told that nothing had arrived yet and that I should return at four. I rode downstairs to see who had arrived: I found Rolf'n'Mary and learned that John was in the huckster's room (natch!). That room was on an appropriate floor: I walked into the elevator and said, "Take me to Nine!"

At four, I was back upstairs, but the goodies still weren't; apparently, the day's supplies were in a van which had been taken out on an errand (no sir, no danger of organization at all...). There was also some difficulty in getting enough ice from the hotel. I doodled in my sketchbook, while the committee members threw fits (sometimes it's nice to be an out-of-towner...).

Shortly before five, the potables returned (without a deposit); I got to go downstairs to replay the Great Parking Garage Caper. We loaded several hundred pounds of soda and beer onto a luggage cart and got into a regular elevator; we knew we were in trouble when the machine kept stopping four inches below the floors. We were greeted by cheers from the throng on 37 (what -- no rose petals!?), but, even so, I fear I did not offer to go back for the second load...

I staggered back to our rooms to see what was to be done about dinner. We walked to Pizzeria Uno, since it was close-at-foot, passing the Richard Daley rally at the Medinah Temple ("Isn't he dead?" "Look, if the dead can vote in this town, surely...") The Chicago-style pizza was fine, but the layers of graffiti carved into the walls give the place a certain lavatory-stall ambience... The Trivialists convened in my room to separate out questions for Capricorn from those for Constellation (you contestants better watch out!). I passed out around 1:30 and the others did soon after.

The Trivia Bowl failed to materialize, since the one team that signed up couldn't find competition; most of the other Chicago contestants were bound up in the motif. I suddenly found myself with the afternoon free to prepare my talk (typical...). I wandered around to see the rest of the convention; the Exhibition of Questionable Inquiries, or Silly Science Fair, was delightful. Higgins and I gave back-to-back (I speak figuratively!) talks on antimatter propulsion and the economics of starflight. Attendance was sorely constrained by two factors, I suspect: one, we were on right before dinner; and two, the folks who wrote the Program Book listed only the gag titles we sent them and neglected to identify the topics and the speakers. Then again, maybe everyone found out we were the speakers. After my drivel, I whipped out the starflight slides while Stephen R. Donaldson signed autographs in the back of the hall (he was rather gracious about it, considering I was hogging the stage). Except for the fact that the transparencies came out rather green, they served to illustrate our efforts; Rolf thinks he can fix the color balance and shoot the movie within a couple months.

A whole GT entourage (fifteen in this one), including the usual Illinois loonies, John Frambach, Dave Levine, Keith Thorne, and one of Valli's associates at work (who put up with all of us), mobbed the Szechuan House down the block. Their quick-thinking staff took us into the basement rumpus room, where we wouldn't disturb the respectable clientele. I took a table apart from the folks I'd seen all week, so as to catch up with some of the other people's lives. We had a fine meal in that cuisine; while most of the group hurried off to see the Möbius show, a few of us took our ease while the staff stacked chairs on the tables.

I returned to my room to dump my coat and argue about the history of technology for an hour with Rich Rostrum. About all I saw of "Max's Bar" was when a blue-and-silver Jerry manifested himself at my door and asked if he could de-alienate himself in my bathroom.

We maintained a GT Landing Party on the broad carpeted stairway between the fifth and seventh floors for a while. After about an hour, some of us drifted off to witness a Möbius shotgun wedding; members of the GT For-Any-Occasion Band sat in on ukulele and duck call. Everything sort of dissolved away by three.

Sunday was sort of an all-day "goodbye," with much of the time spent in trying to find the people to say goodbye to. A highlight was walking off to Watertower Place with Bill-Aytch, the Eisensteins, John Frambach and Steve Salaba for lunch at the deli, D.B. Kaplan's, they of the punny menu. Watertower Place looks just like The Future: it's the embodiment of the American-shopping-mall-city Dream of the Sixties. Riding through seven floors in a glass-walled elevator is as close to "transfer booth shock" as I expect to get in this lifetime. I bade my last farewells at the Con Suite before Bill-Aytch whisked me off to O'Hare. I doubt I'll be back in Chicago again for another year...

In all, this was a pretty busy "vacation"; a number of my planned social calls had to be brushed aside down in Chambana. And a great many people upstate were simply unavailable. You'd better watch out for the Theater that ate Chicago...

\* \* \*

I've just made my travel arrangements for the next few months. I'm going to Lunacon in a couple weeks, though I swore I never would again, because a friend of mine is giving a couple of talks on animation of various sorts. I'll be in Atlanta next month to usher at a wedding and generally delay the honeymoon. I've reserved a double for Marcon and am in search of roommates. My California itinerary in July is yet uncertain: Westercon is in San Francisco, Jamie tells me, and there's also a convention in San Diego I want to see, so I haven't figured out which end of the state to start at.

\* \* \*

At work, our color graphics rig still hasn't been installed yet, so there isn't much to say about it yet. The new communications extension, which we were to occupy on December 1st, still isn't carpeted yet; it seems they just realized that the foundation is on a downslope and the meltwater runoff is draining into the middle of the wing.

Westar-I is indeed Officially Dead, but may be in use during this eclipse season to prop up Westar-II. That sibling has a battery pack in such bad shape that we can't run enough transponders at night to fake even half a satellite, so the spillover will go onto One. Plans are still on to give One the Big Kiss-off around April 15th, but since they want to get Two through next fall's eclipses, those thoughts may change, as they are wont to do. Westar-IV was one year old at 7 PM on February 24th; no one seemed too worked up about that... WU is working very hard to bail out of its Ariane contract, so Westar-VI will very likely go up on the Shuttle early next year. There was a rumor that Six would be launched on a Delta and Seven would go on the Shuttle soon after, but I am told that the other rumor may be truer... That means Seven is still off until 1985. Hughes is due in soon to make various additions to everything so we can handle #6; they will probably



## MEROMORPHIC MELANGE

manage the launch from their Galaxy satellite facility in Manhattan Beach, California, which means important people like vice-presidents will be out there next winter, while we who merely do the work watch from Vernon. Oh, well...

Aviation Week could be used to piece together the great Ariane-versus-Shuttle race for the coming year. The "schedule" is:

Ariane

STS

#6: 19 March (we'll see)

#7: 27 May

#6: 3 June

#8: 25 July

#7: 26 August

#9: 30 September

#8: 4 November

#10: ? November

#9: January 1984

#10: March 1984

(Times subject to change without notice...)

There is some excitement for astronomers, anyway. The Infrared Astronomy Satellite promises yet another explosion in our knowledge of the physical universe. (Time was when I couldn't handle more than a couple explosions a decade...) Until recently, due to the opacity of the atmosphere and the terrestrial interference in the infrared, we knew of only about 4000 celestial infrared sources. IRAS found that many in the first day of operation and it only scans about 1% of the sky each day! Some people think that, by the time it completes its all-sky survey about six months from now, we may come to know of over a million sources. IRAS is expected to remain in operation at least ten months.

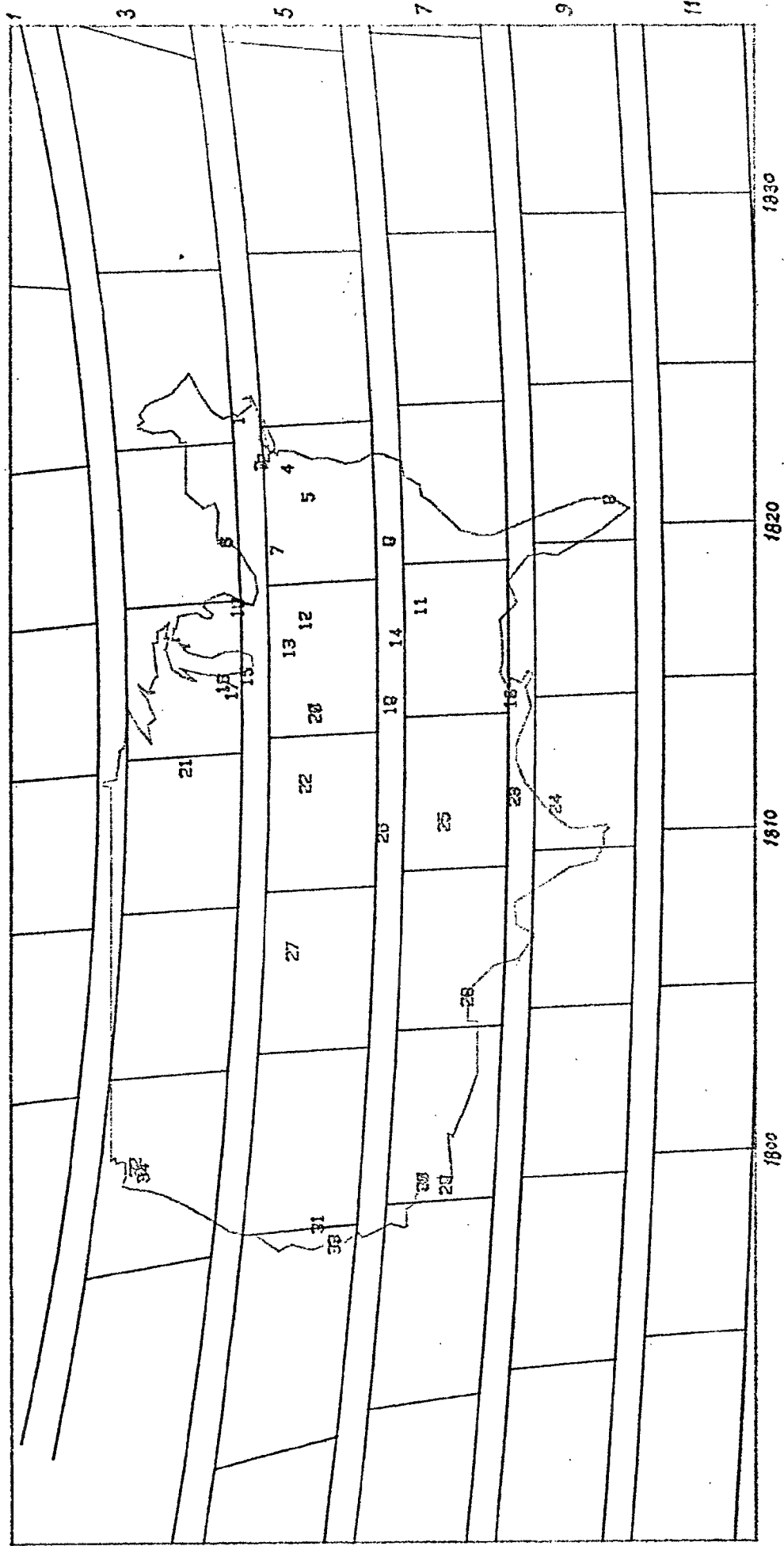
\* \* \*

Around each equinox, along with nighttime passages of each satellite through the Earth's umbra, we also have daytime video outages. Since the satellites appear to sit slightly south of the Celestial Equator as seen from the U.S., the Sun passes right through the various antenna beams during the afternoons of March 1 - 12 and October 1 - 12. There is about a fifteen-minute interval of really intense static on anything being relayed by satellite then. The time of day when this occurs depends upon the longitude of the satellite in question. We had already been issuing tables of outages to our customers, but my boss thought it would be nice to make a map. I've been on this project for a year, but I only got around

# WESTAR-3 SUN INTERFERENCE MAP A

## MARCH 1983

3DB TRACKS FOR 17-M. ANTENNAS



'We Can Dominate'

## PACIFIC AMERICAN LAUNCH SYSTEMS UNVEILS NEW ROCKET DESIGN

From Gary Hudson, man who brought you Percheron fireworks, comes new idea. Hudson was in Washington last week talking up design of Phoenix reusable rocket, shared pictures & plans with Satellite Week. Concept is of "fully reusable, single-stage vehicle [which] will allow the application of 'airline style' production and marketing techniques to space operations for the first time."

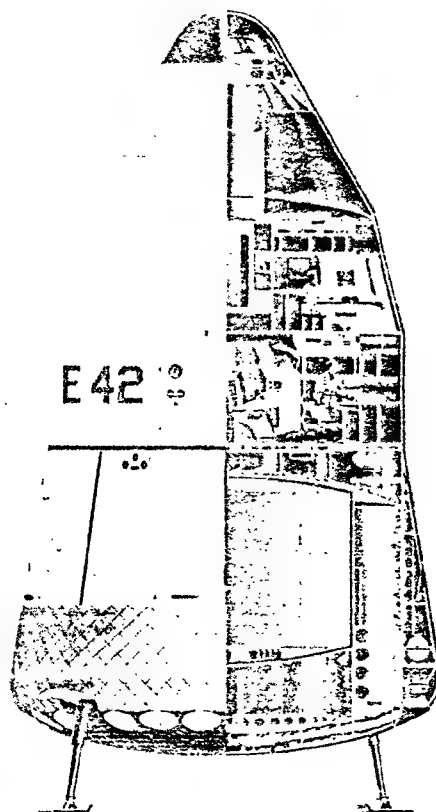
Hudson is one of several entrepreneurs hopeful of operating commercial space launcher but only one claiming to offer "totally new design utilizing 1980's technology." Manned & unmanned Phoenix vehicles, to be built by Hudson's Pacific American Launch Systems, will use "multiple, small, highly efficient, dual fuel engines employing liquid oxygen, hydrogen and propane," according to what's called "executive summary" of system. "High engine efficiency reduces the total volume of propellants needed per flight, allowing smaller, less expensive airframes and lower overall operating costs." Engine will weigh 154 pounds, pack 18,450 pounds of thrust, be capable of putting 5,000-10,000 pounds in geosynchronous orbit without use of upper stage.

Barring political or national security roadblocks, Hudson said, his system could make current launch competitors, both expendables & shuttle, obsolete by 1986: "We can beat the pants off anybody — we can dominate." Reason is cost. Currently, launch costs range from \$33-\$60 million per launch. By 1985, shuttle launch cost will exceed \$70 million. Introductory 1986 sales price for

entire Phoenix vehicle will be \$50 million, Hudson said. Individual launches may go for \$10 million. Not even transfer of ELVs to private sector could bring other systems within reach of competing with those prices, Hudson said.

Pacific American's (not PALS — "we're not an acronym-based company") problems are now rooted in finding financing. System development is expected to cost in neighborhood of \$60 million over 3 years. First \$10 million will fund design work, release airframe and avionics specifications for bid & order long lead-time items. "Production financing should be obtainable through a sophisticated prepayment arrangement with customers similar to those used in the commercial aircraft industry," summary said.

Credibility may be major hurdle for rocket builder whose first launcher, Percheron, joint effort with Space Systems Inc., exploded in flames after inadvertent launch during engine test firing in Aug. 1981. But Hudson said he believes rewards will be worth struggle. He quoted Commerce Dept. study saying space business will be worth \$50 billion by year 2000 and said that, when cheap space transportation is possible, that figure will be "grossly underestimated."



Phoenix Rocket

*Torn from the searing pages of Popular Science...*

SATELLITE WEEK— FEB. 21, 1983

to constructing a working program in the last month. What I have is a roughly orthographic (i.e., what someone hovering over the Equator at 95° West would see) map of the continental U.S. (a/k/a CONUS, or maybe it's "CONTiguous") with tracks of outages sweeping across the country from west to east. The original is in four colors; the numbers mark cities of interest; the handwritten labels indicate the dates of each track (Map B has the even-numbered days) and the center-time of a local outage in Greenwich Mean Time. I still have to teach the computer to draw in the time labels by itself and to compute the Sun's position from an ephemeris on disk (right now, I still have to tell the program where the Sun is). Next time, I'll show how the tracks are computed (haven't had a derivation here for a while...).

\* \* \*

I was asked by some of the folks at CHUSFA to read The Descent of Anansi by Niven and Barnes while I was out there ("It's a quick read...") and to determine, in my capacity as a purported "professional orbital dynamicist", whether the plot gimmick would really work that way. I just recently finished the book (and now have to mail it back to CHUSFA). Without giving anything away to those who may not have read the book yet, I would say that things would work pretty much as the authors describe, at least in a hand-waving sort of analysis. It is vital to the gimmick that the cable itself be tremendously strong iron monofilament and that the space shuttle and the cable pod be of nearly equal mass; it works out that the cable can be regarded as essentially massless (for purposes of the analysis).

As a story, I was not much impressed with this work. The characters and the social situation seems pretty much peripheral to the main idea of the story, as in some of the other recent Niven collaborations; it is all a set-up for the interesting physics problem to be solved toward the end of the book. This felt like nothing so much as a fifty-thousand-word Ross Rocklynne story. I'd feel better if Niven got back to writing about some people I could get worked up about.

It is perhaps trifling of me to point out that there is a small error in the discussion. I was looking for descriptions of the cable and the vehicles so I could check into things. We are told on page 15 that the cable is 0.8 mm thick and 1400 km. long; if we regard it as a tall, skinny cylinder, the cable has a volume of

$$\pi r^2 h = \pi (0.4 \text{ mm})^2 (1400 \text{ km}) = \pi (0.04 \text{ cm})^2 (1400 \cdot 10,000 \text{ cm}) \\ = 7.04 \cdot 10^5 \text{ cm}^3.$$

Iron has a density of about 7.9 gm/cm<sup>3</sup>; we are told that the cable is "a strand of single-crystal iron filaments locked in an epoxy matrix," so it is perhaps a bit less dense than pure iron. The maximum mass of the cable would be

$$7.04 \cdot 10^5 \text{ cm}^3 \cdot 7.9 \text{ gm}^3/\text{cm}^3 = 5.56 \cdot 10^6 \text{ gm} \\ = 5.56 \text{ tonnes}.$$

But, on page 69, we're told that the cable masses over twenty tons; the factor of about four suggests to me that someone substituted the diameter of the cable for the radius. Actually, the error is on the side of exaggeration: the cable is more nearly "massless" than the authors believed.

So, big deal! At least the Earth was spinning the right way...

\* \* \*

Since I'm still way behind in my responses, I will continue to set aside my standard procedures until next time.

APA-TECH #21 --

SOMEBODY HAS TO DO IT: Sure you can change the days of the week with high-energy accelerators; I suspect it has something to do with T-violation (check with Bill).

Let's go back to "the three questions," perhaps for the last time.

I guess we may agree that in a "science-fiction world," SF and main-stream literature would often look a lot alike. I am not convinced that science fiction is particularly efficacious in bringing about "new dreams and goals." Anyone with sufficient imagination and ambition might bring that about; some of the more successful innovators never touched the stuff... Regarding the continuation of your comment, I would agree that well-conceived fantasy has "hard-and-fast rules about what is possible," but I strongly protest your remark that "science right now doesn't seem to." Contemporary science has not become more vague about what is possible nor has it lost hold of the nature of reality; the "rules" (if such there be) are simply proving much more difficult to describe without highly sophisticated mathematical metaphors (if mathematics is the language of Nature, science is its poetry).

I was amazed at first at the somewhat hostile responses I got from a few people when I asked why we should go in for starflight or artificial intelligence. Perhaps I should have phrased my questions less provocatively (had I felt like it). I never suggested that we should not do these things; I wished to investigate the possible motives for doing them. (That's why I said "why not?" is not an answer: there are lots of things people don't do, even though they are not forbidden.)

The work that Bill-Aytch and I have been doing (which we hope to publish soon) strongly indicates that interstellar travel is far more expensive than most writers have even considered. At the prices we're talking about, such travel for personal desire or mere curiosity is out of the question; even plans for profitable exploitation must lie, at best, in the quite distant future. As I understand our history, peoples undertake voyages of exploration for two reasons: when they are utterly desperate (survival of the tribe) or when they can easily afford it (curiosity, commerce). I would contend that we are not desperate for starflight and it will be a very long time before we can do it cheaply.

We mentioned previously that AI would be quite useful in places so remote that light-travel-time would be an impediment to swift, decisive operation. Hence, we could run machinery as far away as

the Moon by remote control (as in Oath of Fealty), but would need robot surrogates for interplanetary missions. It also occurred to me recently that artificial intelligence would be valuable in monitoring processes which occur so rapidly that a human could not observe them and make decisions about controlling them.

I do not deny the importance of having goals: I wish to define the circumstances under which they might be realized.

ISHER-RISE: My humblest apologies. You most certainly should not have been listed as "living under a cloud," especially when I'd just made a list of the contributors to the previous issue. Evidently, there was some carelessness on my part. (Darn right! Bonzo there forget to clean my optical sensors. -- Shal.)

A "Smith-Corana printer"? Obviously one of those cheaper "off" brands you hear about -- generates slightly dyslexic text...

DR. G'S: It's not as hard to "freak the fans" as you might think: sometimes all it takes is a bar of soap...

Those "us vs. them" barriers are created in people's minds; people should aspire to be more than an element in an imaginary category. I am glad to hear that you are feeling better about things.

The geography of the U.S. of A-T was weird because the areas of states were proportional to the number of members in them. Chicagoland used to be enormous and the suburbanites had to be spotted around the city limits; that whole regions has "shrunk" quite a bit since then. I would not only have to add Minnesota now, but New Mexico as well!

NON-LAMINAR ANAESTHETIC: Away back in '77, I was really fascinated by the way Lucas put Star Wars together and by some of the things he did in it, so I went to see it about fifteen times in the space of two years. By then, I began to feel I'd worn it out: I didn't see it at all in re-release. So it was a bit of a treat for me to see it again on cable TV. It really isn't meant for the small screen, though.

Your constant of U.S. net energy consumption divided by the annual GNP, about 79 megajoules per dollar, intrigued me. At first glance, it scarcely seems possible that it could be so ("Is energy really that CHEAP?!"). So I dug out my January electric bill, which I thought was horrific (but I have electric baseboard heating, so what can I expect?). I paid about \$96.50 altogether for just over 1000 kilowatt-hours. One kilowatt-hour is 1000 J/sec x 3600 sec/hr or 3.6 megajoules; I used 3660 megajoules at a cost of 37.9 megajoules per dollar. That means my dollar buys about half of what American economic energy is worth. I guess the surprise is not that energy is particularly cheap, but that a megajoule means so little in a late-twentieth-century American's life. For fun, I figured out that if we leave, say, 100 million 100-watt bulbs on during an average night (that's all the office lights and streetlights and billboards and neon signs in the country), then we are consuming

$$100,000,000 \cdot 100 \text{ J/sec} \cdot 3600 \text{ sec/hr} \cdot 12 \text{ hrs (average)} \\ = 4.3 \cdot 10^{14} \text{ J} = 430,000,000 \text{ megajoules} = 120,000,000 \text{ kWh}.$$

At around 40 megajoules to the dollar, that says that America spends about \$11,000,000 to leave its lights on overnight.

(That's a LOT of dead dinosaurs...)

I will still maintain that a civilization of beings with life-spans similar to ours will rarely care to take on projects whose possible gains lie more than about a century in the future. The exceptions would be for those driven by desperation ("the race must be preserved") or irrational fanaticism ("we want to spread the word/the faith/the race throughout the Galaxy!"). Tipler's ships are just the thing for a world of such zealots; whether such a mind-set permits the requisite climate for free inquiry and technological advancement is not clear from a sociological viewpoint, though. The Roman Catholic Church maintained its sense of identity and purpose for seventeen hundred years through a fairly strict adherence to certain tenets of faith. But they only took Copernicus and Galileo off the Index in the last century and they still don't have any starships... (And corporations won't undertake interstellar exploration until they can make a good showing to their stockholders in the next quarter.)

What projects our current taxes are paying for is perhaps all in how you look at it. If you roll up the whole national debt and count back the number of years of tax revenue that represents, then we are just getting around to paying for, say, 1980. On the other hand, some of our money is going to pay interest on Treasury Bonds purchased in various years (the ones from 1958 are just now maturing). And, of course, we're paying Social Security to folks who started working as far back as the Twenties. So I will concede that we probably are still settling up on some really old items, but I would imagine that it's difficult to say which ones they are.

If you can stand going to a media-con, Jittlov will be at Millennium in Toronto in early June. He probably will come to a Midwestern convention, but only if you ask him...

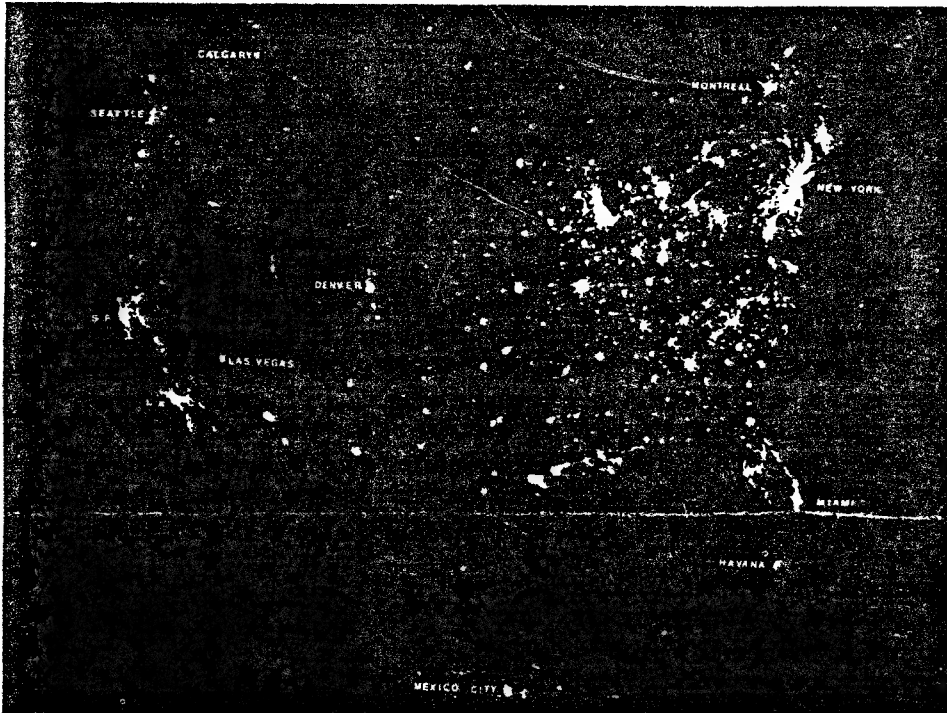
There is some reaction by contemporary architects against the excesses of early twentieth-century architecture, such as that of Le Corbusier and of the Bauhaus and the International Style (which gave us much of our present skylines and all of Brasilia). A good bit of the Architecture as Art and Geometry movement backfired when people actually had to live in and use those buildings. Robert Hughes has some pithy things to say in The Shock of the New and there are some other books, such as Form Follows Fiasco, which attack the Modern movement. (For reference, we are now "post-Modern," until some historian finds a better word.)

That Fourth-of-July lawn-chair pilot was a Mr. Larry Walters of San Pedro, California; he appeared in the end-of-1982 Life magazine. You can probably get him for a con after the FAA is through with him...

The Westar-VIII announcement took me by surprise because our house organ is rarely the first place we hear about something like that. Eight still doesn't exist above the level of rumor at this point: we still haven't even called for bids on Seven. If we do start proposals for it, Eight won't be launched until at least late 1985.

According to one book on the market, there are twenty all-time great SF films, of which your list is not a proper subset. Looking at their choices, I'd say maybe eight to ten are GREAT; if you let the standards slip, maybe around fifteen are "good".





*Night spots—Population densities in the continental U.S. are clear in this composite photo of city lights. Taken from 450 n. mi. altitude, image was compiled from four passes of a U.S. Air Force Block 5D-1 satellite. This weather vehicle flies in near-polar orbit.*

*Yes SIR, a lot of  
dead dinosaurs...*

*- from the Hughes SCG Journal*

**YOUNG AND ABROAD:** There certainly are a number of fine original verbal productions on radio these days. I really like the work of people like Bob and Ray, Jean Sheppard (from back in the Fifties and Sixties), and, more recently, Joe Frank and Douglas Adams. I also have some recordings of Harlan Ellison reading some of his stories and it is clear that he is sometimes influenced by the radio of his youth; it might be fun to have him on radio once in a while. I was not much excited by the NPR productions of Star Wars or A Canticle for Liebowitz. The former is too visually-oriented a conception to be presented in this manner; the latter didn't feel to me like a story which simply had to be told on the radio.

**APA-TECH #22 --**

555: Hoo boy, looks like I screwed up the long-range plans for the mailing deadline this time. I expect we can get back on track, though.

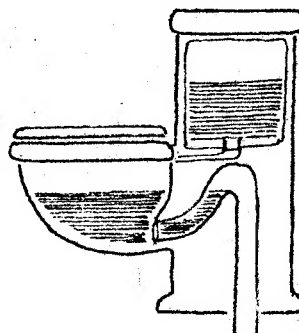
Nice bit of sarcasm concerning the covers: I should have some for you next month.

**CONVEYOR OF CATEGORIES:** Someone once pointed out the analogies in the hierarchies of the Soviet bureaucracy and the Catholic Church. I suspect you'd find such similarities among any systems with authoritarian leanings (and if you think Trufandom isn't authoritarian, try departing from its accepted practices...). I wouldn't call fandom a religion as it does not offer a philosophy of moral conduct.

Rolf has a comment about Old Parr elsewhere. It has often been found that those "130-year-old" Russians were World War I draft evaders who decided to "be their own grandpas." This was frequently pretty easy since the War destroyed a lot of records and documentation in the provinces under the Czar weren't always that good to begin with. I believe the best documented cases for extreme longevity are still for people who lived to be 110 to 115 years old.

As for as your prediction concerning the "household computer" goes, we'll have to wait and see. Some people think that a so-called "Supermom" program, which runs your appliances, reminds you of your appointments and the like, could be realized pretty easily and inexpensively. On the other hand, a breakdown of the central processor would be more than an inconvenience. (It would give a new meaning to the phrase "having your house de-bugged.")

While I was staying with Doc Consolmagno around New Year's, he was reading my APA-TECHs, so we decided to go have a look at a flush toilet. As I understand it, the bowl acts like a fluid trap; when you flush or pour water into the bowl with a pail, the water level ultimately ends up at the same level. That level tells you where the bend in the effluent pipe is. You are essentially correct: the hydraulic pressure forces water out of the bowl and also prevents the water from rising above a specific level. There may be a more detailed diagram in How Things Work.



PHYSICAL MODEL OF A FLUSH TOILET

\* \* \*

I'll resume my catching-up on replies next time: I've GOT to get this out of here.

I had two nasty future shocks in a row this week. Sony ran an ad in Aviation Week for a CCD television camera that is smaller than a 2" cube (fits in your palm) and can take pictures by match-light or infrared penlight (higher quantum efficiency than a vidicon tube). Now video surveillance is easier than ever (\*eek\*)! The next day, I was shown the April issue of Discover, which has a dandy article on how high-resolution computer graphics can be used to doctor photographs (\*triple eek\*). Photographic evidence is no longer admissible in court! Great film actors can be brought back from the dead! You could be on the cover of the National Enquirer with, well, ANYBODY!! "Warbirds of Time" is in the fall season's line-up! Ya know, it's really disturbing when someone shows you how to do something you thought was five years away. So what are we going to be doing in '88?

See you next time, if I haven't been replaced...

## Crews Pull Fiber Optic Cable To Launch Teleport Project

Gee, I always thought we'd  
do that by open beam...

(Headline in Western Union News)

AN UNSUPPRESSED TRANSIENT

ex: ANDY A. ANDA

HOME: 2531 C 46TH  
LOS ALAMOS, NM 87544  
(505) 662-4196

WORK: MS/E528  
LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY  
LOS ALAMOS, NM 87545  
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HELLO!!! It took me long enough, but as you can see, I'm finally in APATECH. I have been associated with GT/JARGONISTS for a good long time, but the overriding demands of homework and the excuse that I got together with a lot of you folks every now and then seem to have been sufficient to keep me out of this here periodical. If you noticed my new address, you can pretty safely agree that moving from Chicago to Los Alamos is a damn good and thorough method of gasfating. But being an unsuppressed transient, I'll be off and chasing after new vanishing points by next Christmas. You may be wondering what the heck ever induced me to land in Los Alamos for a year. Well, a couple of years before I graduated, I caught wind of a real neat opportunity, here at the Lab, called the STEP program (Skills Training Employment Program) which allows recent graduates a one year job as a staff member here before they go scurrying off, away, once again from the real world, to grad school. I applied, and by some miracle, was flown out for an interview and hired. To my surprise, I was hired to work not with the physics or computer groups, but with the Physical Chemistry group. The anomaly is that I had only one ill fated chemistry course when in college. Fortunately, physical chemistry doesn't involve chemistry. It's just a rather ill chosen label for what I started to learn in my modern physics courses (I have found that generally, chemists don't like physical chemistry, and physical chemists dislike regular chemistry). They have enough good physical chemists in the group already, so I guess that they needed someone who could help them with their program-ming. The first week, I was given a terminal and some manuals, and I learned about the Vax-11. Since then, I have been merrily mixing some numerical analysis with FORTRAN, and turning neat equations into fast code. It's been interesting getting back into FORTRAN after not using it for four years. Interestingly, I am not working in the same building as the rest of the people in my group. Until I get my clearance, which will take another couple months, my office is a couple miles away in a laser physics building. Actually, I sort of hope that my clearance takes its time in coming since I have a huge, comfortable, and modern supervisor's office with a very nice view. They are all stuck in what could be described as a concrete bunker. My drive to Los Alamos was marginally interesting. Thanks to the loose ends which ganged up on me, I got on the road a little over a day past my scheduled time of departure. The delay was sufficient to place me into Chicago's first snowfall of the season, and a premature rush hour. Naturally, traffic coagulated. It was only after I had crawled past the junction of 55 with 294 that the trafficular mean density decreased to the point at and below which I can have fun. What made it so much fun while weaving with my usual flair through traffic were: the glare ice on the road; the snow where there wasn't glare ice; the gale force cross winds; and the poor visibility (my windshield wipers had become cocooned in a snow-ice-salt amalgam, allowing them to paint inspired murals on my windshield in a medium of road salt). The weather cleared up near Missouri. I stopped for the night, somewhere in Missouri, in the town of Sullivan at Zeno's Motel (Yes, you guessed it folks, it seemed to take forever to get there). Nothing of interest to report until I hit that tangled labyrinth of detours known officially as Oklahoma City. All the highway markers were different from what my AAA stripmap had led me to believe. After driving for about half an hour while completely and utterly lost, I suddenly found myself driving away from the city, on the correct highway and headed in the proper direction.

BEWARE. OKLAHOMA CITY IS CARNIVOROUS. I IMAGINE THAT MY LITTLE FOREIGN FIESTA JUST GAVE IT INDIGESTION; SO I WAS EXPELLED. I STOPPED THE SECOND NIGHT IN AMARILLO TEXAS--THE HOME OF THE WORLD FAMOUS: INTERNATIONAL HELIUM CENTENIAL TIME COLUMNS MONUMENT. AMARILLO BELIEVES ITSELF TO BE THE HELIUM CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. I DECIDED AGAINST CHECKING OUT THE LOCAL NIGHTLIFE; NOT WANTING TO GET INVOLVED IN ANY BARSOOM BRAWLS. THE NEXT MORNING I WENT TO SEE THE MONUMENT; BUT THE LITTLE INFORMATION ROOM HAD BEEN CLOSED SINCE MARCH. THERE WERE SOME BRONZE PLAQUES STANDING AROUND THOUGH. THEY TOLD ME OF THREE BURIED TIME CAPSULES WHICH; WHEN THEY WERE BURIED IN '66 OR SO (I GUESS IT WAS THE CENTENIAL OF THE DISCOVERY OF HELIUM IN THE SOLAR SPECTRUM); WERE SET TO BE OPENED IN 25, 100, AND 1000 YEARS FROM THEIR ENCAPSULATION RESPECTFULLY. THE REST OF THE TRIP (AT A HIGH SPEED) WAS UNEVENTFUL. AFTER DRIVING INTO LOS ALAMOS ON THURSDAY EVENING; I REPORTED BRIGHT AND EARLY FRIDAY MORNING TO PERSONNEL. THE REST OF THE MORNING WAS SPENT IN THE USUAL FASHION; A FEW ROUNDS OF 20 QUESTIONS; WEARING OUT MY SIGNATURE (AMONG MANY OTHER THINGS; I WAS REQUIRED TO SIGN AN OATH TO THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA--THIS IS IN NEW MEXICO; REMEMBER.); AND VIEWING UNINTENTIONALLY HUMEROUS ORIENTATION VIDEOTAPES. THE AFTERNOON WAS SPENT AT A NICE RESTAURANT IN THE COMPANY OF MY NEW BOSSES. MY FIRST WEEKEND PROVED TO BE QUITE EVENTFULL. SATURDAY I WATCHED A FEW BOWL GAMES WHILE TRYING TO ARRANGE TO VIEW A VACANT APARTMENT. AT THE END OF THE DAY; THE FINAL SCORE WAS: APPOINTMENTS--1. SUNDAY WAS WHEN ALL OF THE ACTION OCCURRED. ADJACENT TO LOS ALAMOS IS A SUPERB BUT VIRTUALLY SECRET SKI AREA. AS A MATTER OF POLICY; THE LOS ALAMOS SKI CLUB; WHICH OWNS THE AREA; ACTIVELY SUPPRESSES PUBLICITY. THE RESULT OF WHICH IS THAT ALMOST ALL OF THE SKIERS ARE FROM THE LOCAL AREA; AND THE LIFT LINES ARE INFINITESIMAL (UNHEARD OF THESE DAYS). SO I WENT SKIING ON SUNDAY AND LEARNED JUST HOW MUCH A TRANSITION OF GOING FROM ABOUT SEA LEVEL TO OVER TEN THOUSAND FEET CAN DO TO ONE'S AEROBIC CAPABILITIES (ONE STANDS AROUND ALOT; GASPING LIKE A FISH SANS WATER). FOLLOWING MY AFTERNOON OF DOWNHILL GASPING; I WENT TO CHECK OUT THAT POTENTIAL APARTMENT. THE APARTMENT IS LOCATED IN WHAT IS CALLED THE NORTH COMMUNITY OF LOS ALAMOS (A FAIRLY SPRAWLING TOWN); OR WHAT MY BOSS CALLS THE SNOW BELT (ITS AT A HIGHER ELEVATION). WHEREAS; ALMOST ALL OF THE OTHER APARTMENTS IN TOWN ARE CLUMPED TOGETHER IN COMPLEXES IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA. A FURNISHED EFFICIENCY; THE APARTMENT WAS BUILT BY THE LANDLORD FOR HIS SON UNDERNEATH THE LANDLORD'S OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE. FOR WHATEVER REASONS; THE RENTING OF THE APARTMENT WAS RESTRICTED TO NONSMOKING; NONPARTYING; SINGLE MALES. THE APARTMENT WASN'T LARGE; AND THERE WAS NO TRANSPARENT WINDOW TO THE OUTSIDE; BUT THOSE THINGS WERE MORE THAN COMPENSATED FOR BY THE FIBERBOARD WOOD PANNELING; THE NICE MODERN KITCHEN AND BATHROOM; A VERY REASONABLE RENT; A WALK IN CLOSET; THE FREEDOM TO PLAY MY NEW STEREO AT ANY VOLUME; AND BEST OF ALL; LOTS AND LOTS OF BOOKSHELVES! NEEDLESS TO SAY; I PAID MY FIRST MONTH'S RENT THEN AND THERE. AS SOON AS I HAD RETURNED TO MY MOTEL ROOM; MY MOVERS CALLED. IT SEEMS THAT THEY WERE A FEW DAYS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE AND WERE SOMEWHERE IN LOS ALAMOS. AFTER THEY DESCRIBED THEIR SURROUNDINGS TO ME; I TOLD THEM THAT THEY WERE PARKED IN MY HOTEL PARKING LOT (THEY ONLY HAD MY PHONE NUMBER). SO I PUT MY COAT BACK ON; WALKED OVER TO THEIR VAN; AND MET MY MOVERS FOR THE FIRST TIME (I HAD LEFT BY THE TIME THEY HAD PICKED UP MY BOXES IN CHICAGO). AFTER A SHORT DISCUSSION; WE CONCLUDED THAT LIFE WOULD BE EASIEST IF I JUMPED INTO THE CAB WITH THEM AND NAVIGATED. MY MOVERS; AS I FOUND OUT; ARE A SUPER NICE HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM. THEIR TOP OF THE LINE CAB; A TECHIE TOUR DE FORCE; MOST CLOSELY RESEMBLES THE COCKPIT OF A COMMERCIAL AIRLINER. AT ABOUT TEN; THEY DROPPED ME OFF AT A PIZZA JOINT AS THEY WERE LEAVIN TOWN. I WAS THEN ABLE TO EAT MY FIRST MEAL OF THE DAY; SATISFIED THAT I COULD START MY FIRST REAL DAY OF WORK BEING ALL MOVED IN. AFTER SUNDAY; TILL NOW; LIFE HAS BEEN QUITE ROUTINE; MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY NIGHTS I PLAY TABLE TENNIS AT THE LOS ALAMOS TABLE TENNIS CLUB; ON THE WEEKEND I SKI; OFTEN WITH MY BOSS; AND WITH ANY TIME LEFT OVER; I UNPACK BOOKS. LOS ALAMOS IS A VERY BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO LIVE. THE CLIMATE IS ALPINE; BUT MODERATE; THE WINTER YIELDS A GOOD AMOUNT OF SNOW; BUT IS SELDOM BITTERLY COLD; AND THE SUMMERS SELDOM PRODUCE A VERY HOT DAY. THIS IS THE KIND OF WEATHER

*you get taken down in the Southwest but at over 7500' in elevation.*

VERY VISIBLE FROM ALL AREAS OF LOS ALAMOS AND THE LAB ARE THE CRESTS OF THE MOUNTAINS WHICH SURROUND THE AREA. AND, AS LOS ALAMOS IS SITUATED ATOP A MESA OR A PLATEAU, ONE MERELY HAS TO DRIVE OUT OF TOWN TO GET A GOOD LOOK DOWN A CHASM. IN FACT, THE LAB IS SEPARATED FROM THE TOWN BY A BRIDGE WHICH SPANS A DEEP, WIDE, SCENIC GORGE. THIS IS NOT TO SAY, THOUGH, THAT LIFE IS TOTALLY IDYLIC. ANYONE YOU MEET FROM LOS ALAMOS WILL PROBABLY VOLUNTEER THAT LIFE IN THE TOWN OF LOS ALAMOS IS BORING. AN HOUR'S DRIVE DOWN A WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD TO SANTA FE IS THE USUAL ESCAPE. ALBUQUERQUE IS ANOTHER HOUR IN THE SAME DIRECTION. LET ME CONCLUDE THIS RATHER LENGTHY TRAVELOGUE TO OFFER AN OPEN INVITATION OF FLOOR SPACE TO ANY AND ALL WHO PASS THROUGH HERE BY INTENTION OR OTHERWISE. OH, AND IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING, THE EXPERIMENT THAT I AM GENERATING CODE FOR IS DELVING INTO THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINETICS OF THE OZONE, NITROUS OXIDE REACTION USING COHERENT ANTI-STOKES RAMAN SPECTROSCOPY--A NONLINEAR TECHNIQUE WHICH UTILIZES A COUPLE OF NON-IONIZED PARTICLE BEAMS AND A DOUBLY DOUBLED YAG LASER WHICH INTERACTS WITH THE TWO PARTICLE BEAMS AND A TUNEABLE DYE LASER WHICH IT PUMPS. OF COURSE, UNTIL I GET MY CLEARANCE, ALL THAT I GET MY HANDS ON IS THE THEORY ON PAPER.

WITH GREAT JOY, I HAVE SEEN THE REBIRTH OF THAT PHOENIX WE ALL KNOW AS PYROTECHNICS! A MOCK WAKE WAS ONCE AGAIN IN THE EARLY STAGES OF PLANNING. I AM VERY CURIOUS AS TO HOW IT WILL EVOLVE WITH THESE NEW DEGREES OF FREEDOM. IN ANY EVENT, I AM SURE THAT JEFF IS GRATEFULL THAT THE BURDEN IS FINALLY OFF HIS SHOULDERS. ROLF: THE UNFILTERED APPLE JUICE IS MARVELOUS, AND I HAVE BEEN LIVING ON THE STUFF SINCE I READ YOUR REMARK ON THE SUBJECT. I WISH I COULD HAVE PARTICIPATED A LOT MORE IN THIS YEAR'S ISHERCON, BUT IF I HADN'T ASSEMBLED THAT PREAMP THEN AND THERE, I MOST LIKELY WOULD STILL BE WITHOUT A STEREO (CRUEL SILENCE TORTURE). REGARDING THE PRIME TOPIC OF THE BILL AND BARRY SHOW AT CONCLAVE, ACTA ASTRONAUTICA, A REAL NEAT JOURNAL--SORT OF A JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH INTERPLANETARY SOCIETY, BUT WITH AN INTERNATIONAL FLAIR, PRESENTS A PAPER, IN ITS JUNE-JULY '82 ISSUE, ENTITLED: ON THE CONTROL OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE BASED TETHERED SYSTEMS. THIS PAPER IS RECOMMENDED ONLY UPON THE CONDITION THAT YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY DD'D ON THE SUBJECT. PAGING THROUGH THE LABORATORY'S PHONE BOOK, I FIND THAT THE MOVIE DARK STAR ISN'T ALL THAT FICTIONAL. YOU SEE, THERE IS SOME PERSON WORKING HERE WHO HAS BEEN GIVEN THE TITLE OF PROJECT MANAGER FOR WEAPONS PHENOMENOLOGY. WHAT'S MORE CONFUSING IS THAT HE IS LOCATED IN THE SPACE PLASMA PHYSICS DIVISION. I'LL BE BACK IN CHICAGO FOR A SHORT TIME IN APRIL FOR A DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT. I'LL TRY TO MAKE A THURSDAY NIGHT, BUT NO PROMISES. FOR THOSE OF YOU TO WHOM IT MEANS SOMETHING, MY FTS NUMBER, AS OF THIS WRITING, IS 843-1927. IF ANY OF YOU ARE ALSO ON THE SYSTEM, LET ME KNOW. MAYBE I'LL GET AROUND TO MAILING COMMENTS NEXT ISH.....